

55 people know a person by one name, some by another, depending on which name he was using at the time they had the closest

- 84 contact with each other. Still another problem was the fact that the Bororo recognize as "fathers" all the men who had sexual relations with Ego's mother at the time of conception

[115] and during pregnancy. Two of my informants had been sons of
[60] the village's "wanton" or "female associate" (Crocker 1969b) and they had only two classes of relatives in the opposite moiety, i.e., fathers and father's sisters (grandmothers).

*60 Only slowly with greater knowledge of the context of each
114 particular instance, did I start to see some pattern in the
124 apparent confusion. The native criteria have been of help
[12] for some of the semantic rules employed in the analysis of
[82] the referential systems, but there is some variation in how people explain extensions of terms. Many people had their own theories, but none of these theories worked through the whole system. One woman, when asked in abstract about the classification of particular kin types, answered in terms of the moiety theory. She would count the connecting links, placing them with her finger in imaginary spaces of her own and the opposite moiety. Once the kin type was placed, she would say, "if he (she) is older than myself, then I will call him (her) ... so and so." Her system could not work in all cases, and she did not even call her own actual relatives according to it.

Another man had a different theory. According to him all the relatives traced through mother were called by the

Birth

- 842 A child may have many fathers. Any man who has had sexual relations with the child's mother before or during pregnancy is considered one of the genitors, and is designated a "father" of the child. Both father (or fathers) and mother are equally responsible for the physical and mental characteristics of the child. Often the Bororo make comments about children saying that they are pretty or ugly, good or bad, some taking after their father, some after their mother. Different characteristics may have been taken from different fathers. As the chief of the village where I worked once told me: "I had two fathers, from the first I received my stature, and that is why I am so short. From my second father I received my heart." His second father had been a big chief and a knowledgeable man from whom he had learned the traditions and songs of the tribe. For the Bororo there is no such thing as a fatherless child. Everyone has a father, and the more fathers one has the better it is for him. The knowledge of my informant was great because, as the Bororo explained to me, he was the son of the village wanton. Therefore all his fathers, all the men from the opposite moiety, taught him songs and stories. It is the duty of the child's mother to inform the boy or the girl when grown up enough to understand who his biological fathers are, and to teach him the kinship terms he should use for them and for their brothers, mothers and sisters.

000 Even now the ideal marriage is one contracted between a

593 white one just as she does when she is menstruating. Neither
846 parent, however, is supposed to have sexual intercourse
834 (again, in practice, the woman's lovers do not conform to
[854] this precept) until the child, if it is a male, starts to
[856] speak and play with bow and arrows, or with dolls and small
baskets if female. Otherwise the child will get weaker and
weaker and eventually die. Only when this period of conti-
[302] nence is over is the time of birth officially ended. The
husband will celebrate this occasion by painting and adorn-
ing his wife and child.

• 842 Many of the ideas and customs described above attest to
the native theory of procreation. Though the Bororo are a
matrilineal people they posit the necessity of a genitor for
the procreation of a child. The importance ascribed to both
the father's and the mother's dreams, to the couvade, and to
the role of the father's female consanguineals during child-
birth are all expressions of the significance that the Bororo
* [60] attribute to both parents. This emphasis on bilaterality is
reflected in the fact that both maternal and paternal half-
siblings are linguistically recognized as full-siblings.

842 Both the Bororo idea that one can have many fathers but
593 only one mother and the obligation for a man to provide for
855 his stepchildren, while a motherless child is taken care of
by his mother's sisters rather than by his stepmother, may
be correlated with the step-kin rule which excludes a step-
mother from the category of genealogically connected rela-
tives. Finally, the fact that one can have only one mother

- Finally, the fact that one can have only one mother is terminologically expressed by the category imuga ("mother")*, of which the only member is one's own mother.

Marriage

- 582 Ideally, marriage should be contracted with some of the lineages from the opposite moiety which are in yorubodare relationship ("alliance") to one's own lineage. Though, because of depopulation, this is rarely the case today, the Bororo are still proud when they can say: I muqu paga karegure, itoredule apore imugure, ikoge, ivire, tadare imugure which can be translated, "I do not live in this place (his wife's house) just by chance. I stay with my wife, I stay among my spouses." It is difficult to render into English the Bororo paga which I translated "by chance." (The Brazilians have the adverb "a toa" that renders it better. This adverb is used very much by the Bororo when they speak Portuguese.) The sentence means that the man is married according to tradition. In saying "I stay with my wife," the Bororo means to say, "I stay with a woman who, by prescription, should be my wife." Every story which describes the establishment of special relationship between two clans by virtue of some gift has the same conclusion "... and so he made them his yorubodare ("allies"), his husbands, and his wives" (Oinore ure uyorubodaredo, ukogedo, uviredo apo).

- 585 A marriage ceremony is very simple. The mother of the girl brings food to the house of the boy, and, if he accepts the offer, he will eat the food (Colbacchini and Albisetti

000their wives.

I am not going to make a summary of this short chapter, but I would like to say something about Bororo views on marriage and procreation. The first is conceptualized from a ⁵⁸²593 normative or ideal point of view, which conforms but poorly to actual behavior. Although one should marry members of [835] specific lineages, this is rarely done. A man should not have a love affair with his brother's wife, but he often [837] does. The wife should tolerate her husband's sexual relations with her sisters, but she usually does not. The native theories of procreation, on the other hand, express realistic recognition of actual events. If one's mother had intercourse with three men, all of them are the child's father. [893] It is a good thing to have many fathers, since one can profit by it. Both views, the idealistic concerning marriage and the realistic concerning procreation, are recognized as 181 legitimate and are taken into account. This is representative of one of the most outstanding Bororo attitudes: let us imagine that things are perfect, but let us get used to living with imperfections.

/120 cont./

562 disproportion would raise its own value, but also because
121 sexuality might make the individual more tolerant towards
847 the other sex than toward its own. However that may be:
the custom of killing the children of a certain sex can only
clarify the position of the sexes if the causes are known.

562 In South America infanticide is, first of all, a custom
847 of nomadic tribes and in general concerns /121/ both sexes
[17] in the same way. Ordinarily the causes are economic ones:
the mother among nomadic people cannot let a child live
every year, without creating, thanks to this, a disastrous im-
pediment to the proper feeding of another one born earlier.

847 Among the Bororo these causes are disguised by the belief that
787 establishes a connection between the child expected and not
yet born and the bad dreams of one of the relatives, and
especially of the future mother herself. If, for example,
the women shortly before the delivery sees any misfortune
in a dream, be it dead persons, wounds, snake bites, epi-
demics, floods, fires, etc., the expected child is considered
the cause of the disaster and will be sacrificed immediately
after birth. This is demanded by the community of the tribe,
which does not want to admit anything that might harm its
existence. In general the parents do not personally kill the
newborn child; they hand it over to the relatives for this
847 purpose. In any case, infanticide among the Bororo does not
[562] reveal a sex preference.

[121] Whether the limitation of deliveries among a people is
in relation to the position of the sexes is a question that can
only be resolved by means of an examination of a concrete
case. The Bororo told me that anciently they prepared with
the leaves of an herb a decoction that would sterilize the
women forever. They said that only two old men knew this
757 remedy. P. Antonio Colbacchini (A tribu dos Borôres, Rio
[113] de Janeiro, 1919, pp. 58 and 59) writes the following: "They

/121 cont./

- 842 avoid conception and pregnancy by means of some potions
757 and tisanes which they obtain from roots, /122/ leaves, and
bark of plants -- and they are familiar with a great variety
of them, to which they attribute efficacy for the desired
purpose. The woman and the man take them, not only once,
but many times. The action itself of these remedies is very
relative and problematical; it seems that many draw their
value from superstition, as I had the chance to verify. The
effectiveness of some of the potions that are called Jorubo
bó et ore bocua-re-u, however, cannot be denied. To judge
by appearances, the substances that they use most to avoid con-
ception are in general very astringent, their active element
thus probably being tannin."

847 The Bororo also told me that they used different abortive
methods. According to Colbacchini (o.c., p. 59), "they
induce abortion by physical means -- hard work, carrying
enormous loads, blows on the abdomen, or an exaggerated
compression of it ... or also taking some foods or beverages
that might produce such an effect."

Also Karl von den Steinen (o.c., p. 503) mentions that
abortion by internal means is frequent. As far as we could
see, one cannot draw from the limitation in deliveries among
the Bororo any conclusions with respect to the position of the
sexes.

163 In this matter it is interesting to examine the number of
births, as I was able to verify with the help of the parish books
on the eighteenth day of January of 1934 in the mission of
Meruri. Of course it is to be noted in this respect that the
[177] influence of the Salesians produced basic changes.
[70]

In the following list, the numbers that follow the names
/123/ of the parents indicate their probable years of life.
A y after these numbers signifies widower or widow from a
previous marriage.